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SUBJECT: KABILA ALLIES WIN EIGHT OF NINE GUBERNATORIAL RACES

11. (U) Summary: Candidates allied with the pro-Kabila Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP) won eight of nine gubernatorial contests January 27, including Kinshasa. Jean-Pierre Bemba's Union for the Nation (UfN) coalition won just one race, in Equateur province. Elections in the two Kasai provinces were postponed due to last-minute legal challenges against UfN candidates. The victories give the AMP coalition control over nearly every newly-elected government institution. End summary.

12. (U) Provincial deputies elected governors and vice governors in nine of the DRC's eleven provinces January 27. Candidates allied with President Kabila's AMP coalition won six of the nine contests, in the provinces of Bandundu, Katanga, Kinshasa, Maniema, Orientale, and South Kivu. All of them are from the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD). Two independents, both allied with the AMP, were elected in Bas-Congo and North Kivu. Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) won the gubernatorial contest in the former Vice President's home province of Equateur.

13. (U) The AMP victories give the pro-Kabila coalition majority control over most of the new government institutions at nearly every level. It now has paper majorities in the National Assembly, the Senate and eight of the eleven provincial assemblies, and holds at least eight of the DRC's eleven governorships. Kabila ally Antoine Gizenga of PALU was designated as Prime Minister on December 30 and is expected to nominate an AMP-dominated slate of ministers later this week.

14. (U) Elections were not held in Western and Eastern Kasai because of a last-minute legal challenge (septel). An AMP-allied party on January 25 called upon the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) to invalidate the candidacies of Alex Kande and Dominique Kanku, who are running as MLC candidates in Western and Eastern Kasai, respectively. The challenge alleges the two possess dual nationality. According to DRC law, elected officials and candidates can only have Congolese citizenship. The CEI postponed the elections in the Kasais until February 10 to respond to the allegations and to a January 26 appellate court decision validating Kanku's candidacy.

15. (SBU) The AMP coalition victory in Kinshasa is surprising. The winning candidate, Andre Kimbuta (PPRD), a well-known sports and soccer promoter, defeated heavily favored businessman Adam Bombole (MLC), head of the MLC's Kinshasa chapter. The UfN controls the majority of the capital's provincial assembly, which on January 13 had elected an entire slate of UfN-affiliated deputies to the chamber's executive secretariat. Kinshasa residents voted heavily in favor of Bemba and Uf candidates in the July and October

presidential legislative and provincial elections.

¶16. (SBU) The results from the Bas-Congo election will likely be challenged by the UfN. An adviser to Leonard uka, the MLC gubernatorial candidate who lost by one vote, said the election must proceed to a second round as no candidate received an "absolute majority" of votes. (Note: The DRC electoral law states in gubernatorial elections a run-off is held if no candidate wins an absolute majority in the first round. End note.) Independent candidate Simon Mbatshi was declared the winner with 15 of 29 votes cast, while Fuka received the remaining 14. Fuka's camp claims that to win an "absolute majority" a candidate must have gained half of the available votes, plus one. In a creative interpretation of the law, Fuka's camp maintains this means 16 of the 29 votes (14.5 plus one, rounded up) are necessary.

¶17. (SBU) In North Kivu, outgoing governor Eugene Serufuli, realizing he could not win, threw his support to the AMP candidate, Jean Chrysostome Vahamwiti. Serufuli's support did not prove sufficient for Vahamwiti. The winner was the mayor of Beni, Julien Paluku, who ran as an independent but is a member of Mbusa Nyamwisi's RCD-K/ML party, which is allied with the AMP. Paluku is an ethnic Nande and appears to have been elected based largely on that criteria in an effort to blunt Hutu influence in the provincial government. Paluku's election is also a victory for Nyamwisi both over his North Kivu political rival Serufuli and the AMP's national leadership, which had backed Vahamwiti.

¶18. (U) The other gubernatorial winners are: provincial medical inspector Richard Ndambu (PPRD, Bandundu), former

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Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Jose Makila (MLC, Equateur), businessman and National Assembly deputy Moise Katumbi (PPRD, Katanga), Didier Manara (PPRD, Maniema), outgoing Orientale Vice Governor Medard Autasi (PPRD, Orientale), and Kabila adviser Celestin Cibalonza (PPRD, South Kivu).

¶19. (SBU) Comment: The results of the Kinshasa gubernatorial ballot in particular are a clear sign that indirect elections by provincial deputies in no way represents the will of voters. The UfN holds 27 of the assembly's 48 seats, indicating that some form of vote-influencing took place. A pro-Kabila governor in a city that voted heavily in favor of Bemba, coupled with a pro-Bemba provincial assembly, is a recipe for gridlock and a source of tension. The result of this and other indirect elections risks popular disillusionment with Congo's new democracy. It should also be noted, however, that AMP "control" over the new institutions of government is less solid than it may appear at first glance. The AMP coalition has a variety of competing individuals and factions within it, and are not necessarily united on a variety of fundamental issues. There are a lot of politics to be played out in the weeks and months ahead. End comment.
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